

# Preface

**T**wenty-two years ago, we collaborated with a group of teachers and school leaders to create a program of over-time professional learning for teachers. The program was known by its acronym, QUILT (Questioning and Understanding to Improve Learning and Thinking). While naming it, contributors deliberated over whether the *T* in QUILT should refer to teaching or to thinking. Thinking won. Originally, however, Understanding was not included in the program's title, which was simply **Q**uestioning to Improve Learning and Thinking. When Jackie reported that name to her family, her son Will, a fifth grader at the time, objected that the *U* didn't get full shrift. Several days later, he proposed that the *U* should stand for understanding because, as he said, teachers question so that students will think and understand. Then they will have truly learned. Almost a quarter of a century later, we continue to profess Will's wisdom: We question to engage students in thinking so that understanding and true learning result.

Six years ago, Corwin published our first book on questioning, *Quality Questioning: Research-Based Strategies to Engage Every Learner*. We organized the book around the QUILT framework and incorporated learning from the work we had done with teachers across the country. We continue to believe in the value of the QUILT framework and the research that underpins it. However, the knowledge base for Quality Questioning emerged from research on teacher effectiveness. Hence, the Quality Questioning framework focuses almost exclusively on teacher behaviors. Over time, our work and research in the field have convinced us that student behaviors, including the willingness and ability of students to ask questions, are perhaps a more important part of the thinking and learning equation than teacher questioning behaviors themselves. We subsequently incorporated this conviction and associated tools into the content of professional learning we facilitate for teachers.

## A NEW FRAMEWORK

With the opportunity to write a new book on classroom questioning came the responsibility to reflect on our work in the field and to challenge our thinking. The result is the Framework for Thinking Through Quality Questioning, which is the organizer for this book. This new framework includes teacher behaviors, but each teacher behavior is connected to

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specific student thinking outcomes and behaviors. In effect, we turned our old framework inside-out and began our consideration of each behavior by reference to the results for students. The primary knowledge bases for this endeavor are those of cognitive science and the learning sciences. The former was still in its infancy when we began our work in questioning;

### FRAMEWORK FOR THINKING THROUGH QUALITY QUESTIONING

#### Frame Quality Questions

- Determine content focus
- Consider instructional function
- Stipulate expected cognitive level
- Match to social context
- Polish grammar and word choice

#### Strengthen Student Thinking

- Expect thoughtful responses
- Afford time for thinking
- Scaffold thinking and responding
- Make thinking visible

#### Use Formative Feedback

- Employ questions to assess student progress
- Identify gaps between current and expected knowledge and skills
- Provide feedback to students
- Use feedback to inform instruction

#### Promote Response-Ability

- Hold students accountable
- Develop student capacity to ask quality questions
- Provide opportunities for students to learn collaboratively
- Teach skills of collaborative discussion

#### Nurture a Culture for Thinking

- Develop collaborative, caring relationships
- Teach and reinforce norms for questioning and thinking
- Adopt a language of thinking
- Cultivate habits of mind
- Celebrate breakthroughs in thinking

the latter had not yet emerged. While the Framework for Thinking Through Quality Questioning continues to draw on the teacher effectiveness literature, it is much more focused on the learner. This framework and accompanying strategies and tools are appropriate for all K–16 classrooms and all content areas.

The new framework, like its predecessors, is flexible and malleable, and we hope it, too, will withstand the test of time. It consists of five component behaviors, each of which, in turn, consists of a set of contributing behaviors.

## ORGANIZATION OF THIS BOOK

Chapter 1 of this book presents a vision for student thinking and relates this vision to the Framework for Thinking Through Quality Questioning. Each subsequent chapter is dedicated to one of the framework’s five components and its associated behaviors. We encourage you to read and reflect on the focus questions provided at the beginning of each chapter—and to return to them at chapter’s end for reflection.

Included within each chapter are opportunities for reader reflection. These prompts, designated as “Thinking Through QQ,” can help you think through your quality questioning (QQ) practices.



This icon signals these questions for reflection. We encourage you to read and respond to the prompts to connect the text to your personal and professional life.

You will also encounter norm statements throughout the text. These are quickly identifiable by the compass icon.



These are guides to teacher and student behaviors in classrooms committed to the use of quality questioning. We spotlight these norms because we believe that implementing them in a classroom is a first step toward improving questioning and thinking practices for all members of that classroom community.

Each of the first five chapters concludes with a section titled Connections: Developing Learner Capacity. These sections invite readers to explore the relationships between the component featured in the chapter

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and three variables associated with student learning and achievement: (1) student metacognition, (2) student engagement, and (3) student self-efficacy. Development of these three student variables can transform students into independent, lifelong learners equipped to make thoughtful decisions as citizens of a global community. The bridge icon indicates the beginning of each Connections section.



We continue our 25-year quest as actively engaged learners focused on quality questioning as it impacts teaching and learning. We learn through our reading and study of an ever-expanding knowledge base that informs the practice. We learn as we attempt to incorporate quality questioning practices into our teaching. We learn, most of all, as we observe K–12 classrooms and interact with educators across the country regarding their successes and challenges in using quality questioning with their students. We are continuing to think through and further develop our understanding of quality questioning, and we hope this book will support your efforts to do the same.

Jackie Acree Walsh

Beth Dankert Sattes